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WA small business tops the Nation

The WA small business sector has consistently topped the country for growth and employment according to a report released today by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS).

Over the 15 year period to 1998-1999, the number of WA small businesses doubled and employment increased 84 percent, representing average annual rates of increase of 4.9 percent for businesses (nationally 3.7 percent) and 4.2 percent for employment (nationally 3.1 percent), both higher than any other State or Territory.

WA small businesses are amongst the fastest in Australia to embrace information technology with 63 percent using computers. Only the ACT had a higher proportion with 78 percent. WA's larger small businesses (those with 5-19 employees) had the highest proportion of Internet access and direct use of e-commerce in the country.

The average weekly gross wages and salaries of small business employees in 1999-2000 were below that recorded for all WA private sector employees. Notable exceptions were those people employed in electricity, gas and water supply, finance and insurance, and health and community services industries.

Other information released in the quarterly round up of WA statistics includes;

WA's trade surplus for the September quarter 2000 reached $5,191 million, a 64 percent increase from the same period the previous year.

State final demand in trend terms grew by 0.3 percent in the September quarter 2000 to $15,882 million. This was the seventh successive quarter of positive growth although the rate of growth has been slowing in recent quarters.

Capital expenditure in trend terms continued to decline, down 8 percent on the previous quarter and down 25 percent over the year.

The index of total hourly rates of pay excluding bonuses rose sharply by 1.2 percent, the highest quarterly increase since the index was first compiled (December quarter 1997).

More details can be found in **Western Australian Statistical Indicators** (cat. no. 1367.5) available from ABS bookshops. The main features of the publication are available on this site.

If you wish to purchase a copy of this publication, contact the ABS Bookshop in your Capital city.

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